

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I would yield myself such time as I may consume and again thank our dynamic duo on the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee for bringing us another bill which will protect the rights of our veterans and especially in job opportunities.

I yield as much time as she may consume to the gentlelady from South Dakota (Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN).

Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for being so supportive of the work of the subcommittee.

I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1089, as amended, the Veterans Employment Rights Realignment Act of 2009, which the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee passed on March 19 and the full committee approved on May 6.

Once again, we wouldn't be able to consider this bill today if not for the support and leadership of the chairman and ranking member both of the full committee as well as Mr. BOOZMAN on the subcommittee. And we introduced this bill on February 13, 2009, again in response to a number of hearings that were held in the 110th Congress.

The bill would amend title 38 of the U.S. Code to move the enforcement of the Uniform Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act—known as USERRA—to the enforcement of those protections, USERRA protections, of veterans and members of the armed services employed by Federal executive agencies to the U.S. Office of Special Counsel.

The Office of Special Counsel is an independent Federal investigative and prosecutorial agency that was created by Congress with the goal of protecting employees, former employees and applicants for employment from prohibited personnel practices.

Under a demonstration project established by Public Law 108-454, the Office of Special Counsel investigated some Federal sector USERRA claims from 2004 until 2007. This demonstration project showed that the Office of Special Counsel had the expertise and ability to quickly obtain corrective action for federally employed veterans.

By granting the Office of Special Counsel initial jurisdiction over all of these Federal USERRA claims, we give claimants a single agency to investigate and resolve their complaint. This will be more efficient than the current circumstance where first the Department of Labor investigates the claim, and then the claim is then transferred to OSC at the veteran's request if the Department of Labor fails to find a resolution, which then prompts a second investigation.

So, again, I want to thank the chairman, Chairman FILNER, for his support. I also want to thank Congresswoman KIRKPATRICK for her amendment during the subcommittee consideration of the bill that clarified the role of the Office of Special Counsel in this important

piece of legislation. Again, I encourage my colleagues to support H.R. 1089.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1089 as amended, the Veterans Employment Rights Realignment Act of 2009 which would amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the investigation and enforcement of the employment and unemployment rights of veterans and members of the Armed Forces employed by Federal executive agencies through the Office of Special Counsel and for other purposes.

This bill was introduced by the chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity, Ms. STEPHANIE HERSETH SANDLIN, on February 13, 2009. Mr. Speaker, as I stated earlier today when speaking about H.R. 466, as amended, the Uniform Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act provides significant protections to veterans returning to civilian employment. In the past, enforcement of these rights was limited to the Department of Labor's veterans employment and training services—VETS. Unfortunately, the VETS case investigation and enforcement process took too long and the 108th Congress required a comparison of the time it took the Office of Special Counsel and VETS to process employee claims involving Federal agencies.

I believe that having the Office of Special Counsel handle all Federal claims is the right way to go because of their expertise in dealing with Federal agencies in other similar matters.

I am hopeful that H.R. 1089, as amended, will not only shorten the time it takes to complete action on the case but that veterans will ultimately see a friendlier Federal bureaucracy when it comes to veterans returning to their former Federal employer.

I appreciate Ms. HERSETH SANDLIN's leadership in this area in bringing forward this important legislation. I want to thank Chairman FILNER and Ranking Member STEVE BUYER in moving this bill in a timely manner.

And having no further speakers, I yield back the balance of my time.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FILNER. I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1089, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. FILNER. I ask my colleagues to unanimously support H.R. 1089, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1089, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

URGING ALL AMERICANS AND PEOPLE OF ALL NATIONALITIES TO VISIT THE NATIONAL CEMETERIES, MEMORIALS, AND MARKERS ON MEMORIAL DAY

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 360) urging all Americans and people of all nationalities to visit the national cemeteries, memorials, and markers on Memorial Day.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 360

Whereas the United States has fought in wars outside and inside of its borders to restore freedom and human dignity;

Whereas the United States has spent its national treasure and shed its blood in fighting those wars;

Whereas the National Cemetery Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs maintains 128 national cemeteries that serve as the final resting place for nearly 3,000,000 veterans and their dependents;

Whereas each year, millions of Americans visit the national cemeteries, memorials, and markers;

Whereas overseas sites annually recognize Memorial Day with speeches, a reading of the Memorial Day Proclamation, wreath laying ceremonies, military bands and units, and the decoration of each grave site with the flag of the United States and that of the host country; and

Whereas these splendid commemorative sites inspire patriotism, evoke gratitude, and teach history: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives strongly urges Americans and people of all nationalities to visit national cemeteries, memorials, and markers on Memorial Day, where the spirit of American generosity, sacrifice, and courage are displayed and commemorated.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) and the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. FILNER. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

I think it is only appropriate, Mr. Speaker, that we bring this resolution to the floor as we approach Memorial Day. The resolution encourages people to visit the cemeteries, memorials, and markers overseen by the American Battle Monuments Commission. Now, that is a commission that I am sure many people have not heard of.

What is the American Battle Monuments Commission, and what do they

do? Back in 1923, Congress created this commission to control the construction of military cemeteries, monuments, and markers erected to honor American servicemembers killed on foreign soil. Host countries provide the necessary lands for the sites to the United States in perpetuity and free of charge.

The commission cares for 24 military cemeteries, 25 memorials, monuments and markers in 15 countries around the world. These sites serve as the final resting place for almost 125,000 Americans who fought in the Mexican-American War, World War I and World War II. The commission takes special care that all cemeteries under its supervision are maintained to the highest standard attainable. The commission extends an open invitation for all to visit these magnificent shrines and to go beyond the most well known, like Normandy, and venture into others.

Each site has its own sense of history, sacrifice and beauty, and each offers a unique experience. For example, no two have the same guard nor architecture. Perhaps only the spiritual qualities are similar. In less than a month from now, on June 6, the commission will commemorate the 63rd anniversary of the D-day landing by opening a new Normandy-American cemetery visitors center. This center, which has been under construction since 2002, will tell the story of the American soldiers memorialized at Normandy.

I encourage all to visit this new D-day center and any of the sites under the jurisdiction of the commission. Overseas cemeteries are the lasting reminders of America's willingness to come to the defense of others. These tangible symbols of American values endure long after the fighting is over.

Mr. Speaker, I would reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 360 urging all Americans and people of all nationalities to visit the national cemeteries, memorials and markers on Memorial Day. This legislation was sponsored by our colleague from Tennessee and a new and very active member of the Veterans Affairs' Committee, Congressman David Roe, on April 23, 2009, and we all appreciate him bringing this forward.

Mr. Speaker, properly honoring a veteran's memory is one of our most solemn obligations. These patriots are due the final tribute of a grateful Nation. Here in the U.S., the National Cemetery Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs cares for 128 national cemeteries that serve as the final resting place for over three million of our Nation's veterans and their dependents. The National Park Service cares for 14 veterans' cemeteries as well.

But it's not just here in the United States that our fallen are honored. The overseas national cemeteries of the American Battle Monuments Commission provide our Nation's heroes an

honored repose in national shrines far from the homes they left in order to protect democracy. These overseas cemeteries have become the gold standard in memorializing the precious gift to us by those who fell in our defense.

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The commission oversees 24 overseas military cemeteries that serve as resting places for almost 125,000 American war dead. Tablets of the missing memorialize more than 94,000 U.S. servicemen and -women as well as 25 memorials, monuments and markers.

These memorials and cemeteries are mute testimony to the sacrifices of Americans who fought in battles across the globe such as Flanders Field, Belgium; Manila, Philippines; North Africa, Tunisia; Sicily-Rome, Italy; Corozal, Panama; Lorraine, France; Mexico City, Mexico; and Normandy, France.

Mr. Speaker, with Memorial Day less than a week away, this is a most fitting time to consider this resolution. I ask all my colleagues to support it, and I look forward to its passage.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FILNER. I continue to reserve.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he would require to the author of the resolution, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE).

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Resolution 360, urging all Americans and people of all nationalities to visit the national cemeteries, memorials, and markers this Memorial Day.

Following a tradition begun in 1868, our Nation will pause this Monday in remembrance of those who have sacrificed their lives in defense of our free Republic. Fond mourners and friends will set flowers and flags on the graves of the fallen. Our flag, flown at half staff since sunrise, will at noon be raised high and those gathered will be called to pledge allegiance. A bugle will sound Taps, and we will make another pledge: to aid the widows, widowers, and orphans of our heroic dead, and our disabled veterans.

There is no central location for this observance. Our servicemembers' final resting places are in all our towns and communities. The National Cemetery Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs maintains 128 national cemeteries in 39 States and Puerto Rico. One of those cemeteries is in my hometown of Johnson City, Tennessee. The Department of the Army maintains Arlington National Cemetery and the U.S. Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery.

Americans have died defending liberty around the globe and have been laid to rest far from home. The American Battle Monuments Commission oversees 24 military cemeteries abroad where 125,000 of our war dead remain.

The freedoms we enjoy today, the freedoms enjoyed by a civilized Europe,

and those free from despots rising to national power are the proof these men and women did not die in vain. This sacrifice should be celebrated, and never forgotten.

Not all who serve perish fulfilling their duty. They return to us as veterans and deserve our thanks and a commitment to serve them. We erect monuments and markers and make pilgrimages there to honor them.

That is this resolution's call. Congress should urge Americans to visit these cemeteries, these monuments and memorials, and I as a veteran encourage my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. FILNER. Does the gentleman have further speakers?

Mr. BOOZMAN. Yes, I have two more.

Mr. FILNER. I think this may be the first time in American history that a Roe is followed by a Poe, but that's just the way it is. I would reserve the balance of our time.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE).

Mr. POE of Texas. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, it's been said, "From this day to the ending of the world, we in it shall be remembered. We few, we happy few, we band of brothers; for he today that sheds his blood with me shall be my brother." Shakespeare penned these words in Henry V, describing the commitment of a soldier to his fellow soldiers.

I rise today in support of H. Res. 360 which calls on all Americans to honor our veterans by visiting memorials and national cemeteries on Memorial Day. I am proud to cosponsor this very important legislation.

Since 2004, 26 men and women from the Second Congressional District area of Texas have served honorably and given their lives for the cause of freedom in Iraq and Afghanistan. Every time a brave member of America's military from my area dies for this country, I come down to this House floor, and I talk about their lives, their legacy, their family, and those others that they have left behind.

Every year, millions of Americans visit the national cemeteries and the memorials and the war markers all over the United States to remember the men and women who have so courageously fought to defend America's freedom.

Mr. Speaker, in a land far, far away, there are over 9,000 Americans buried in a place called Normandy in France, most of them young teenage boys that left America and went off to war to defend our country. They shed their blood in 1944 for not only us but for those folks in Europe. My father who served in the great World War II as an 18-year-old never talked about his service in Europe until he and Mom visited Normandy and its cemetery 50 years after that important event. He, like many other veterans, is proud to have

served but keeps saying that the heroes are still buried in places throughout the world.

Each Memorial Day all across America, parades are held, wreaths are laid, grave sites are decorated as a tribute to our fallen warriors. On Veterans Day, we remember those who fought and came home, but on Memorial Day, we remember those who fought and did not come home.

The Department of Veterans Affairs preserves 128 cemeteries all over the world that are the final resting place for over 3 million Americans. These national cemeteries and memorials remind us of the warriors who have fought and gave all to protect the rest of us. When called, they went.

I am pleased to support this legislation and urge all Members to approve this resolution.

As Toby Keith so eloquently put it in his tribute to the American soldiers, he said about the American soldier: "I don't do it for money, there's bills that I can't pay. I don't do it for the glory, I just do it anyway. I'm an American soldier, an American beside my brothers and sisters, I will proudly take a stand. When liberty's in jeopardy I will always do what's right. I'm out here on the front lines, so sleep in peace tonight. I'm an American soldier."

These warriors, Mr. Speaker, are our sons of liberty and the daughters of democracy. They are our heroes, and they need to be honored and remembered by the rest of us for all time.

And that's just the way it is.

Mr. FILNER. I continue to reserve.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. Speaker, that was my last speaker on the subject.

I want to thank Mr. ROE of Tennessee for bringing this forward in a very timely way and such an important message that we remember those that have sacrificed so much for all of us.

I want to thank Committee Chairman BOB FILNER and Ranking Member STEVE BUYER for allowing us to go forward with the bill, and certainly I want to urge all of my colleagues to support H. Res. 360.

And with that, having no further speakers, I yield back the balance of my time.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on House Resolution 360.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker, the United States has fought wars throughout our history to restore both freedom and dignity inside of its own borders, as well as around the world. We have shed our blood and spent our national treasure fighting these wars. On Memorial Day, the Nation is reminded of the phrase spoken constantly, that freedom is not free.

These wonderful commemorative sites that we spoke of today inspire patriotism, invoke gratitude, serve as a permanent and lasting reminder of the sacrifices made by the men and women of the United States military. They are reminders of America's willingness to come to the defense of others, to protect the freedom and liberty of its people, and ensure the prosperity of our Republic.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to unanimously support House Resolution 360.

Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 360, a bill encouraging all Americans to honor our veterans by visiting national cemeteries and memorials this Memorial Day.

Since 1862, more than three million burials have been made in VA national cemeteries.

National cemeteries are the testimony of a grateful nation to appropriately commemorate the Americans who have served our nation in the armed forces.

My home state of Colorado has a population of over 427,000 veterans.

I am proud to represent a district that is home to almost 70,000 veterans.

As a veteran myself, I know how much of an honor it was to serve my country during the Vietnam era.

My father, Henry Salazar, was a staff sergeant in the Army during World War II.

Two years after being diagnosed with Alzheimer's, my father came down to breakfast one morning and told us that he wanted to be buried in his uniform.

As I held my father just before he passed away he told me that he loved me and his last word was "Uniform."

Throughout the four years that my father lived with Alzheimer's, the two things he never forgot were how much he loved his family and how proud he was to serve his country.

It is this dedication to duty and unyielding commitment that have ensured our freedom and our way of life even in our nation's most troubled times.

The courage and sacrifices of our veterans set a necessary example to our youth and all Americans.

Their stories are important chapters in the history of our nation.

That is why I am working with members of the Colorado delegation to bring a national veterans cemetery to southern Colorado.

Current standards place many VA cemeteries closer to large metropolitan areas.

This is an issue that is faced by veterans in small and rural communities similar to those in the Third Congressional District of Colorado.

I look forward to continue working on issues that improve the lives of our veterans and honor their service.

Mr. FILNER. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 360.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

SUPPORTING NATIONAL WOMEN'S HEALTH WEEK

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 120) supporting the goals and ideals of National Women's Health Week, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 120

Whereas women of all backgrounds should be encouraged to greatly reduce their risk of common diseases through preventative measures, such as engaging in regular physical activity, eating a nutritious diet, and visiting a healthcare provider to receive regular check-ups and preventative screenings;

Whereas significant disparities exist in the prevalence of disease among women of different backgrounds, including women with disabilities, African-American women, Asian/Pacific Islander women, Latinas, and American Indian/Alaskan Native women;

Whereas healthy habits should begin at a young age;

Whereas preventative care saves Federal dollars designated for health care;

Whereas it is imperative to educate women and girls about key female health issues;

Whereas it is recognized that offices of women's health within the Department of Health and Human Services, the Food and Drug Administration, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Health Resources and Services Administration, the National Institutes of Health, and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality provide services that support women's health research, education, and other services that benefit women of all ages, races, and ethnicities;

Whereas the annual National Women's Health Week begins on Mother's Day and celebrates the efforts of national and community organizations working with partners and volunteers to improve awareness of key women's health issues; and

Whereas in 2009, the week of May 10 through May 16 is designated National Women's Health Week: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) recognizes the importance of preventing diseases that commonly affect women;

(2) supports the goals and ideals of National Women's Health Week;

(3) calls on the people of the United States to use National Women's Health Week as an opportunity to learn about the health issues women face;

(4) calls on the women of the United States to observe National Women's Check-Up Day by receiving preventative screenings from their health care providers; and

(5) recognizes the importance of Federal, State, and private programs that provide research and collect data on common diseases in women.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS) and the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) each will control 20 minutes.